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Bill 85 Strengthens Regulation of Dangerous Dogs *Legislation stiffens possible penalties for owners of dangerous dogs*

HONOLULU, HI – Honolulu City Council Bill 85, which strengthens the current city ordinance relating to penalties levied against owners of dangerous dogs, passed first reading at the City Council meeting today. According to the provisions of the bill, introduced by Council Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, a dog owner commits the offense of negligent failure to control a dangerous dog if the owner does not take reasonable measures to prevent the dog from attacking a person or another animal without being provoked, and if the attack results in a serious injury or death of an animal or bodily injury to a person other than the owner.

"I have been contacted by constituents, some who have been attacked by vicious dogs, or who have had friends or other family members attacked, about the need to strengthen the current city ordinance relating to these dangerous animals," said Honolulu City Council Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz. "Families should not have to worry about the possibility of an unprovoked attack. Of particular concern are their kapuna or keiki who may not be strong enough to fend off an attack by a dangerous dog in their neighborhood. This bill encourages dog owners to take preventative measures to control their pets or suffer significant legal consequences."

(more)

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Bill 85 strengthens the current dangerous dog ordinance by revising Section 7-7.2(c), relating to mandatory sentencing by: 1) Increasing the mandatory minimum fine from \$50 to \$500; 2) Making probation of the dog owner mandatory for not more than six months in lieu of 30 days imprisonment; 3) Revising the mandatory restitution provision so that the dog owner must provide restitution to any individual who has suffered bodily injury or property damage as a result of an attack by the dog where the individuals suffers financial losses or medical expenses due to the attack (Medical expenses may include the costs of necessary counseling services for the individual).

The legislation also revises other mandatory provisions including: 1) The requirement of the dog owner to procure liability insurance or post a bond of not less than \$50,000, or for a higher amount if the court finds a higher amount appropriate to cover the medical and/or veterinary costs resulting from potential future actions of the dog; 2) The requirement to keep the dog, when outside the owner's premise, attended and kept on a leash no longer than eight feet in length.

Bill 85 also states that the owner is prohibited from selling or transferring the ownership or physical custody of the dog prior to the time stated in the summons, and the citation shall notify the owner of this prohibition. This prohibition shall not apply when the owner transfers ownership of the dog to the city animal control service.

Honolulu City Council Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz represents Council District 2, which includes Mililani Mauka, Wahiawa, Whitmore Village, Mokuleia, Waiialua, Haleiwa, Waimea, Pupukea, Sunset Beach, Kahuku, Laie, Hauula, Punaluu, Kahana, Kaaawa, Kualoa, Waiahole, Kahaluu, Ahuimanu, and a portion of Heeia.

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